

February 23, 2022

**Testimony Regarding HB 5037 - Dental Reimbursement Rates**

Elizabeth Lacombe, Plantsville, CT, Tunxis Community College Dental Hygiene

Senators Kushner, Cicarella, Osten, Hartley, and Miner, Representatives Abercrombie, Betts, Walker, Dathan, Nolan, and France, and distinguished members of the Appropriations Committee,

My name is Elizabeth Lacombe, and I am a registered voter in Plantsville, CT.

I am testifying my role as Dental Hygiene Student at Tunxis Community College. I have recently learned about public health, Medicaid, and reimbursement rates from my courses. Many people do not receive the care they need, especially in the dental field, and it is important that there are people and legislatures to advocate for them. Dental care is just as important as medical care. Our overall health can be determined by the state of our oral health.

The proposed increased reimbursement rates for adults seeking dental treatment on HUSKY are greatly appreciated, especially the proposed endodontic rate matching the children's rate. However, we are concerned the 25% increase is too small to increase provider participation. **In order to increase provider participation in Medicaid, adult dental reimbursement rates need to be increased to parity with the child rates.**

2 out of 3 adults on HUSKY do not access dental care, many because they cannot find a dentist. If the reimbursement rates are increased, this can allow dental providers to accept those with Medicaid, therefore, helping patients on HUSKY have more access to dental care. The more access they have, the more issues can be resolved. According to public health dentists, 8 out of 10 adults on HUSKY who need a root canal end up getting an extraction because they cannot find a specialist to treat them. An extraction should be the last resort, not the only choice. Time and access are two things that can be changed with the increased reimbursement rates.

I urge you to increase the adult Medicaid reimbursement rates to bring them to parity with the child Medicaid rates. This will allow family dental practices to accept Medicaid patients of all ages, expanding the network and improving access to care.

We look forward to continuing this conversation about how we can best provide comprehensive dental care to Connecticut's low-income residents. Thank you for your time and for supporting access to care in Connecticut.

Thank you,



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